



**NOAA** NATIONAL OCEANIC AND  
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



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*Japan has called for an emergency meeting of countries that fish for Atlantic bluefin tuna as members of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). The meeting will take place May 30, 2010, in Barcelona, Spain. While it is not an official meeting of ICCAT, Japan has called on parties to reiterate their joint commitment to stock recovery. U.S. Commissioner to ICCAT, Dr. Rebecca Lent, has issued the following statement to clarify U.S. views in advance of the May 30 meeting. The next annual meeting of ICCAT is scheduled for November 17-27, 2010 in Paris, France.*

#### Statement by Rebecca Lent, U.S. Commissioner to ICCAT, on Atlantic Bluefin Tuna

As a member of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT), the United States remains deeply concerned about the status of Atlantic bluefin tuna, particularly given the steep decline of the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean stock due to many years of unsustainable management measures and rampant illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.

At the February 2010 meeting of ICCAT's Compliance Committee, participants in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna fishery described steps they were taking this year to reduce quotas, limit capacity, and enforce a shorter fishing season consistent with previous ICCAT decisions. ICCAT members fishing for eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna, however, must do more to ensure the future of this important resource. This November, ICCAT members must not fail to carry out the legally binding agreement reached in 2009 to put eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna on the path to recovery. Specifically, ICCAT's membership has already agreed to set catch levels for 2011-13 at a level that will have at least a 60% chance of rebuilding eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna to the biomass that will support maximum sustainable yield by 2023 and to suspend the fishery next year if ICCAT's 2010 stock assessment indicates a serious threat of fishery collapse.

Given concerns about the status of bluefin tuna, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) met in March 2010 and debated a proposal to ban the international commercial trade of the species. The debate on this proposal was vigorous, and while it ultimately was not adopted, the United States was encouraged by the strong commitments made during the CITES meeting by many eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean bluefin tuna harvesters to follow the scientific advice and do whatever is necessary through ICCAT to recover the stock in a timely manner.

If ICCAT fails, any remaining trust in the organization's ability to manage eastern Atlantic bluefin tuna will be lost, and the future of a magnificent and important species may be as well. The United States intends to work closely with our international partners at ICCAT to ensure this does not happen.

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